REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments above and the remarks below.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejection

In the Office Action claims 1-43, 51, and 53-70 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. In particular, the phrase "wherein one or more aspects of managing the information traditionally performed within a private electronic environment are performed" in claims 1, 19, 26, 51, and 53 is not clear. In response, claims 1, 26, 51, and 53 have been amended to remove the phase "traditionally performed within a private electronic environment" so that the claim language now reads as "wherein one or more aspects of managing the information are performed." It is noted that claim 19 does not include the objected phrase.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the §112 rejection to claims 1-43, 51, and 53-70 is overcome.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejection

In the Office Action, claims 1-23, 25-48, 50-74, and 76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207). Applicants respectfully, but most strenuously, traverse this rejection for the reasons below.

Briefly summarized, applicants' invention is directed generally to performing one or more aspects of managing information within a public electronic environment, rather than a private electronic environment.

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As used in this application, the term "public electronic environment" means a public computer network, that is, a publicly accessible computer environment such as the Internet. As used in this application, the term "private electronic environment" means a private, secure computer network, such as a company's internal local-area-network which is not accessible via a public computer network.

In one embodiment, applicants' invention is directed to a method for managing the creation of a proposal which includes obtaining data for the proposal from a private electronic environment, creating the proposal at a public electronic environment disconnected from the private electronic environment, the creating using at least a portion of the obtained data, and providing the proposal to the private electronic environment.

Advantageously, aspects of the present invention minimize access to the back-end system of a private electronic environment by pre-fetching data from the back-end system and storing it on the web server of a public electronic environment. This data is then used to create and/or maintain proposals on the front-end system. This enables the information to be worked-on in a user friendly environment, and does not require the user to stay connected to the private electronic environment. When the proposals are complete, they are then forwarded to the back-end system (private electronic environment) for preparation as a contract.

With reference to the applied patent, Walker et al. disclose a buyer-driven e-commerce system, otherwise know in one prominent embodiment as, priceline.com's "reverse auction" business format (Priceline system), where consumers can go the Internet to name their price for goods and services, and sellers electronically decide whether to accept the customer's price.

For example, in the Priceline system, consumers submit a bid, known as a "conditional purchase offer," to buy goods or services -- airline tickets or automobiles, for example -- from unknown sellers at a certain price, and they guarantee the offer with a credit card. Priceline system presents the offers to the sellers, who then have the option of either fulfilling or rejecting the bids, or making a counteroffer. The

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Priceline system then completes the transaction transferring the funds from the buyer's credit card.

When asserting a §102 rejection, it is well established that there is no anticipation unless (1) all the same elements are (2) found in exactly the same situation and (3) are united in the same way to (4) perform the identical function. As amended, applicants' independent claims and the Walker et al. patent do not have the same elements, or even functional equivalents thereof.

By this amendment, independent claims 1, 26, and 53 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of canceled claims 9, 43, and 61, respectively, therein. For example, claim 1 has been amended to recite a method for managing information with includes "identifying information from a private electronic environment to be managed", "managing the information within a public electronic environment, wherein one or more aspects of managing the information are performed within the public electronic environment off-line from the private electronic environment", and "registering the managed information with the private electronic environment." Claims 26 and 53 have been similarly amended. Claim 51 has also been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 9, 43, or 61 therein. The introduction of new matter has been carefully avoided.

First, the system disclosed in Walker et al. is operated entirely in a public network. Thus, Walker et al. fail to disclose a private electronic environment or disclose identifying information from a private electronic environment to be managed. By way of example, and as shown in FIG. 1, a buyer connected to the public network simply makes a conditional purchase offer.

Second, applicants strenuously disagree with the position taken in the Office Action on page 3 that Walker et al. "teach a method for managing information" which includes "managing information within a public environment off-line from the private environment." As noted above, the system disclosed in Walker et al. is operated entirely in a public electronic environment.

In particular, in the "System Architecture" section of Walker et al. in column 11, lines 53, it is noted that:

> The system architecture of a first embodiment of the apparatus and method of the present invention is illustrated with reference to FIGS. 1 through 4. As shown in FIG. 1, the apparatus of the present invention comprises seller interface 300, central controller 200, and buyer interface 400 (collectively the "nodes"). Each node is connected via an Internet connection using a public switched phone network, such as those provided by a local or regional telephone operating company. Connection may also be provided by dedicated data lines, cellular, Personal Communication Systems ("PCS"), microwave, or satellite networks. Seller interface 300 and buyer interface 400 are the input and output gateways for communications with central controller 200. (emphasis added)

In addition, Walker et al. address the need for security not by operating separate private electronic and public electronic environments, but instead by using separate public online servers which are susceptible to attack. Walker et al. with reference to FIG. 20, describe a "Trusted Server Embodiment" section in column 27, lines 20-35 as follows:

> In one embodiment of the present invention, central controller 200 is separated into three distinct elements: operations server 160, trusted server 165, and bonding agency 170. Each server performs a distinct task in the process of managing CPO 100. This separation makes it more difficult for attackers to compromise the system, as they must defeat the security of three separate systems instead of one. As indicated in FIG. 20, these servers work in conjunction with buyer interface 400 and seller interface 300. Operations server 160 has the task of posting CPOs 100, and accepts all transactions previously authenticated by trusted server 165. Trusted server 165 authenticates the identity of buyers and sellers, while bonding agency 170 verifies the ability of buyers to pay and the ability of sellers to deliver on bound CPOs 100. In this embodiment, each server type may be distributed over a number of servers.

It is noted that Walker et al. refer to "Off-line Embodiments", however these embodiments are not related to private and public electronic environments as recited in the pending claims, but instead to buyers (submitting an offer) and sellers communication (an acceptance) with the central controller via other "off-line" public environments such as a telephone, a fax machine, postal mail, or other communication tools.

Third, registration of a completed agreed new contact in a private electronic environment is not addressed in the system disclosed in Walker et al. As noted above, the system disclosed in Walker et al. is operated entirely in a public electronic environment.

Accordingly, Walker et al. fail to disclose the same elements or functions as applicants' systems and methods for managing information such as a proposal. As noted above, Walker et al. fail to disclose a private electronic environment. In addition, Walker et al. fail to disclose identifying information from the private electronic environment to be managed. Walker et al. also fail to disclose managing the information within a public electronic environment off-line or disconnected from the private electronic environment. Furthermore, Walker et al. also fail to disclose registering the managed information with the private electronic environment.

Original independent claims 19, 44, 52, and 71 which are directed to methods and systems for managing the creation of a proposal clearly define applicants' invention over Walker et al. Amended independent claims 1, 26, 51, and 53 which are directed to methods and systems for managing information also now define applicants' invention over Walker et al.

Since the system disclosed in Walker et al. do not disclose the same elements, or perform an identical function as in this aspect of applicants' invention, Walker et al. would not have anticipated applicants' invention as now recited in independent claims 1, 19, 26, 44, 51, 52, 53, and 71. The dependent claims are believed allowable for the same reasons noted above in connection with the

independent claims from which they directly or ultimately depend, as well as for their own additional features.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection

In the Office Action, claims 24, 49 and 75 were rejected under U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

First, as discussed above, the system disclosed in Walker et al. is operated entirely a public electronic environment, and Walker et al. specifically address the need for security with separate public online servers (which are susceptible to attack). See Walker et al. at column 27, lines 20-35.

More particularly, for the reasons noted above, Walker et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest a method of managing information which includes identifying information from a private electronic environment to be managed, and managing the information within a public electronic environment, wherein one or more aspects of managing the information are performed within the public electronic environment off-line from the private electronic environment, and registering the managed information with the private electronic environment as recited in independent claims 1, 26, 51, and 53. Walker et al. also fail to disclose, teach or suggest a method of managing the creation of a proposal which includes obtaining data for the proposal from a private electronic environment, creating said proposal at a public electronic environment disconnected from the private electronic environment, the creating using at least a portion of the obtained data, and providing the proposal to the private electronic environment, as recited in independent claims 19, 44, 52, and 71.
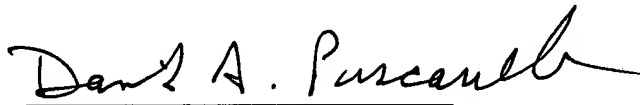
It is respectfully submitted that applicants' invention, as now recited in claims is patentable over Walker et al.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that the application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

If a telephone conference would be of assistance in advancing prosecution of the subject application, applicants' undersigned attorney invites the Examiner to telephone him at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,

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